

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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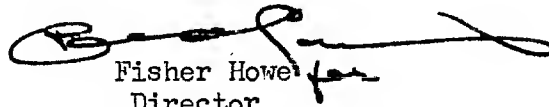
March 3, 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HONORABLE ALLEN W. DULLES
DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Subject: President's Conversation with
Soviet Ambassador

personal

There is enclosed for your/information the memorandum
of the conversation between the President and the Soviet
Ambassador on March 3, 1958, prepared by the Secretary.


Fisher Howe
Director
Executive Secretariat

Enclosure:

Memorandum of Conversation.

SECRET Attachment

STATE review(s) completed.

March 3, 1958

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Participants: President Eisenhower
Secretary Dulles
Soviet Ambassador Menshikov

The Ambassador said that he had sought this meeting as a follow-up of the conversation which he had had with the President when he had presented his letters. The Ambassador said he had reported that conversation objectively to his Government and had asked for this meeting a week ago in order to tell the President the substance of what was contained in the subsequent Memorandum which Mr. Gromyko had delivered to Ambassador Thompson. Now that that Memorandum had been delivered this meeting which he had requested had less significance. The Ambassador, however, went on to say that he hoped that it would be possible within a few days to arrange through diplomatic channels for a meeting of Foreign Ministers of an agreed composition and at an agreed date and place.

The Ambassador went on to say that his Government, aware of the especially heavy responsibilities that devolved on the President of the United States, would not oppose the holding of a meeting of Heads of Government in the United States at a city to be selected by the United States.

The President then referred to the fact that it was not usual for him to transact business directly with foreign ambassadors and he did not want to set a precedent by this meeting. Otherwise he might be confronted with requests from over eighty ambassadors.

The President went on to discuss the proposed meeting of Heads of Government and said that there were difficulties in the way and that he felt that there was a necessity for preparation in terms of the substance of matters to be discussed. The President said with emphasis, "We want to

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find a way to do useful business." But he said we do not want a mere spectacle or a propaganda exercise. The need is for honest preparation of agreed subjects which would lead up to a final act by the Heads of Government. A mere spectacle or propaganda meeting would, the President thought, be without value and indeed of positive disadvantage in confusing the peoples of the world.

The President said that he appreciated the courtesy reflected by the indicated willingness of the Soviet Government to have a meeting if one were to be held in the United States. The President also said that he did not want his opening remarks about the request of the Soviet Ambassador to meet with the President to be taken as indicative of any irritation or impatience on his part. The President realized that the Ambassador was carrying out his instructions.

Secretary Dulles then spoke, emphasizing the impracticability of over eighty ambassadors doing business directly with the President and the importance that any meeting with the President be regarded as exceptional.

The President, in this connection, interjected that he could think of only one prior case where this had been sought and then events had made it unnecessary.

The Secretary went on to emphasize again the necessity of preparation. If the "Summit" meeting were to be more than a spectacle. The Ambassador said he thought that there were topics upon which agreement could now be foreseen. The Secretary said he was not clear as to what these topics were. The Soviets proposed to discuss the cessation of testing, but only if this were divorced from "cut-off". The United States proposed to discuss outer space, but the Soviets were only willing to discuss it in connection with the "liquidation of foreign bases".

The President then referred to the unwillingness of the Soviets to discuss the reunification of Germany or the carrying out of earlier agreements with respect to Eastern European states.

The Secretary referred to the note of the Soviet Government to the French Government and pointed out that this had been even more explicit than the note to the United States to the effect that before there was a meeting

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of Foreign Ministers, there must be a firm agreement as to the fact of a "Summit" meeting and the date and place. This reduced the Foreign Ministers' meeting to what was almost perfunctory. The Secretary said he did not particularly object to reducing the role of a Foreign Ministers' meeting because he thought that much of the preparatory work could better be done through diplomatic channels rather than at a Foreign Ministers' meeting. There were some matters that particularly and almost exclusively involved the United States and the Soviet Union. But this did not imply that diplomatic channels would limit contacts to our two Governments because through diplomatic channels there could also be discussions with the British, French and others, as they were involved.

The Ambassador said that he would try to report our views objectively to his Government, but asked whether a formal reply to the Soviet Memorandum could be expected at an early date. The Secretary said that a prospective reply had been discussed between him and the President on Saturday afternoon; that we were now discussing it with some of our allies and that the Secretary hoped that a reply could be finalized for delivery the latter part of the week. The Ambassador thanked the President and the Secretary and discussed briefly what he would say to the press. The President suggested he should say merely that he had had a friendly talk. The Ambassador accepted this and suggested adding that he had hoped to have such talks "from time to time". The Secretary suggested omitting this as it would create problems with other ambassadors if it were to be assumed that the President was to meet periodically with the Soviet Ambassador. The Ambassador indicated he would drop this remark.

The President reiterated that he did not want the Ambassador to feel that the President was in any sense impatient with the Ambassador for having sought this meeting. He had spoken only in general terms and wanted, if possible, to find ways whereby our two great countries could get more closely together.

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